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THE BEAUTY OF PEACE.

BY L. MARIA CHILD.

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“Power itself has not half the might
Of gentleness.”—LEIGH HUNT.
—

Will you pardon me, courteous reader, if instead of a story, I give you something more like a sermon? If you ask why I suppose it will not suit you as well, I may answer playfully in the language of old Dr. Mayhew of Boston, who sometimes indulged in a vein of pleasantry not usual with clergymen in his Puritanic times. Being asked what was the reason that the Council of Bishops voted the Song of Solomon into the Bible and the Wisdom of Solomon out, he replied, “Indeed I cannot tell; except that mankind have always preferred songs to wisdom.”

Moreover you may listen more coldly to the advocacy of peace principles than to other wise words; because few men professing to believe the Christian religion, venture to deny their truth, while at the same time all agree in giving them a sort of moonlight reputation, a will-o'-the-wisp foundation, as beautiful but impracticable theories. But I cannot help feeling a strong hope, amounting to faith, that the world will be at last redeemed from the frightful vortex of sin and misery into which it has been drawn by the prevailing law of Force. And surely it is a mission worth living for, that the Christian doctrine of overcoming evil with good is not merely a beautiful sentiment, as becoming to the religious soul as pearls to the maiden's bosom, but that it is really the highest reason, the bravest manliness, the most comprehensive philosophy, the wisest political economy.

The amount of proof that it is so, seems abundant enough to warrant the belief that a practical adoption of peace principles would be *always* safe, even with the most savage men, and under the most desperate circumstances, provided there was a chance to have it distinctly understood that such a course was not based on cowardice, but on principle.

When Capt. Back went to the Polar regions, in search of his friend Capt. Ross, he fell in with a band of Esquimaux, who had never seen a white man. The chief raised his spear to hurl it at the stranger's head; but when Capt. Back approached calmly and unarmed, the spear dropped and the rude savage gladly welcomed the brother man, who had trusted in him. Had Capt. Back adopted the usual maxim that it is necessary to carry arms in such emergencies, he would probably have occasioned his own death, and that of his companions.

Raymond, in his Travels, says: “The assassin has been my guide in the defiles of Italy, the smuggler of the Pyrenees has received me with a welcome in his secret paths. Armed, I should have been the enemy of both; unarmed, they have alike respected me. In such expectation, I have long since laid aside all menacing apparatus whatever. Arms may indeed be employed against wild beast; but men should never forget that they are no defence against the traitor. They may irritate the

wicked and intimidate the simple. The man of peace has a much more sacred defence—his character."

Perhaps the severest test to which the peace principles were ever put, was in Ireland during the memorable rebellion of 1798. During the terrible conflict, the Irish Quakers were continually between two fires. The Protestant party viewed them with suspicion and dislike because they refused to fight or pay military taxes: and the fierce multitude of insurgents deemed it sufficient cause for death, that they would neither profess belief in the Catholic religion nor help them fight for Irish freedom. Victory alternated between the two contending parties, and as usual in civil war, the victors made almost indiscriminate havoc of those who did not march under their banners. It was a perilous time for all men; but the Quakers alone were liable to a raking fire from both sides. Foreseeing calamity, they had nearly two years before the war broke out, publicly destroyed all their guns, and other weapons used for game. But this pledge of pacific intentions was not sufficient to satisfy the government which required warlike assistance at their hands. Threats and insults were heaped upon them from all quarters; but they steadfastly adhered to their resolution of doing good to both parties and harm to neither. Their houses were filled with widows and orphans, with the sick, the wounded and the dying, belonging both to the loyalists and the rebels. Sometimes, when the Catholic insurgents were victorious, they would be greatly enraged to find Quaker houses filled with Protestant families. They would point their pistols, and threaten death, if their enemies were not immediately turned into the street, to be massacred. But the pistol dropped, when the Christian mildly replied, "Friend, do what thou wilt, I will not harm thee, or any other human being." Not even amid the savage fierceness of civil war, could men fire at one who spoke such words as these. They saw that this was not cowardice, but bravery much higher than their own.

On one occasion, an insurgent threatened to burn down a Quaker house, unless the owner expelled the Protestant women and children, who had taken refuge there. "I cannot help it," replied the Friend: "So long as I have a house, I will keep it open to succor the helpless and the distressed, whether they belong to thy ranks, or to those of thine enemies. If my house is burned, I must be turned out with them, and share their affliction." The fighter turned away, and did the Christian no harm.

The Protestant party seized the Quaker schoolmaster of Ballitore, saying they could see no reason why he should stay at home in quiet, while they were obliged to fight to defend his property. "Friends, I have asked no man to fight for me," replied the schoolmaster. But they dragged him along, swearing that he should stand in front of the army, and if he would not fight, he should at least stop a bullet. His house and schoolhouse were filled with women and children, who had taken refuge there; for it was an instructive fact, throughout this bloody contest, that *the houses of men of peace, were the only places of safety*. Some of the women followed the soldiers, begging them not to take away their friend and protector, a man who expended more for the sick and the starving, than others did for arms and ammunition. The schoolmaster said "Do not be

distressed, my friends. I forgive these neighbors; for what they do, they do in ignorance of my principles and feelings. They may take my life, but they cannot force me to do injury to one of my fellow creatures." As the Catholics had done, so did the Protestants; they went away and left the man of peace safe in his divine armor.

The flames of bigotry were of course fanned by civil war. On one occasion, the insurgents seized a wealthy old Quaker, in very feeble health, and threatened to shoot him, if he did not go with them to a Catholic priest, to be christened. They had not led him far, before he sank down, from extreme weakness. "What do you say to our proposition?" asked one of the soldiers, handling his gun significantly. The old man quietly replied, "If thou art permitted to take my life I hope our heavenly Father will forgive thee." The insurgents talked apart for a few moments, and then went away, restrained by a power they did not understand.

Deeds of kindness added strength to the influence of gentle words. The officers and soldiers of both parties had had some dying brothers tended by the Quakers, or some starving mother who had been fed, or some desolate little ones, that had been cherished. Whichever party marched into a village victorious, the cry was, "Spare the Quakers! They have done good to all and harm to none." While flames were raging, and blood flowing in every direction, the houses of the peace-makers stood uninjured.

It is a circumstance worthy to be recorded, that during the fierce and terrible struggle, even in counties where the Quakers were most numerous, but one of their society fell a sacrifice. That one was a young man, who, being afraid to trust to peace principles, put on a military uniform and went to the garrison for protection. The garrison was taken by the insurgents, and he was killed. "His dress and arms spoke the language of hostility," says the historian, and "therefore they invited it."

During that troubled period, no armed citizen could travel without peril of his life; but the Quakers regularly attended their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, going across the country, often through an armed and furious multitude, and sometimes obliged to stop and remove corpses from their path. The Catholics, angry at Protestant meetings being thus openly held, but unwilling to harm the Quakers, advised them to avoid the public road, and go by private ways. But they in their quiet innocent way, answered that they did not feel clear, it would be right for them to go by any other path than the usual high road. And by the high road they went unmolested; even their young women, unattended by protectors, passed without insult.

Glory to the nation that first ventures to set an example at once so gentle and so brave! And our wars—are they brave or beautiful, even if judged of according to the maxims of the world? The secrets of our cowardly encroachments on Mexico, and of our Indian wars, would secure a unanimous verdict in the negative, could they ever be even half revealed to posterity.

A few years ago, I met an elderly man in the Hartford stage, whose conversation led me to reflect on the baseness and iniquity often con-

cealed behind the apparent glory of war. The thumb of his right hand hung down as if suspended by a piece of thread; and some of the passengers inquired the cause. "A Malay woman cut the muscle with her sabre," was the reply.

"A Malay woman!" they exclaimed: "How came you fighting with a woman?"

"I did not know she was a woman; for they all dress alike there," said he. "I was on board the U. S. ship *Potomac*, when it was sent out to chastise the Malays for murdering the crew of a Salem vessel. We attacked one of their forts, and killed some 200 or more. Many of them were women; and I can tell you the Malay women are as good fighters as the men."

After answering several questions concerning the conflict, he was silent for a moment, and then added with a sigh, "Ah, that was a bad business. I do not like to remember it; I wish I never had had any thing to do with it. I have been a seaman from my youth, and I know the Malays well. They are a brave and honest people. Deal fairly with them, and they will treat you well, and may be trusted with untold gold. The Americans were to blame in that business. The truth is, Christian nations are generally to blame in the outset, in all their difficulties with less civilized people. A Salem ship went to Malacca to trade for pepper. They agreed to give the natives a stated compensation, when a certain number of measures full of pepper were delivered. Men, women and children were busy picking pepper, and bringing it on board. The captain proposed that the sailors should go on shore and help them; and the natives consented with the most confiding good nature. The sailors were instructed to pick till evening, and then leave the baskets full of pepper among the bushes, with the understanding that they were to be brought on board by the natives in the morning. They did so, without exciting any suspicion of treachery. But in the night the baskets were all conveyed on board, and the vessel sailed away, leaving the Malays unpaid for her valuable cargo. This, of course, excited great indignation, and they made loud complaints to the commander of the next American vessel that arrived on their coast. In answer to a demand of redress from the government, they were assured that the case should be represented and the wrong repaired. But "Yankee cuteness" in cheating a few savages was not sufficiently uncommon to make any great stir, and the affair was soon forgotten. Sometime after another captain of a Salem ship played a similar trick, and carried off a still larger quantity of stolen pepper. The Malays, exasperated beyond measure, resorted to Lynch law, and murdered an American crew that landed there. The U. S. ship *Potomac* was sent out to punish them for this outrage; and, as I told you, we killed some 200 men and women. I sometimes think our retaliation was not more rational or more like Christians than theirs."

"Will you please," said I, "to tell me what sort of revenge *would* be like Christians?"

He hesitated, and said it was a hard question to answer. "I never felt pleasantly about that affair," continued he; "I would not have killed her, if I had known she was a woman." I asked why he felt any more

regret about killing a woman than a man. "I hardly know why, myself," answered he. "I don't suppose I should, if it were a common thing for women to fight. But we are accustomed to think of them as not defending themselves; and there is something in every human heart that makes a man unwilling to fight those who do not fight in return. It seems mean and dastardly, and a man cannot work himself up to it." "Then if one nation *would* not fight, another *could* not," said I; "what if a nation, instead of an individual, should make such an appeal to the manly feeling, which you say is inherent in the heart?" "I believe other nations would be ashamed to attack her," he replied. "It would take away all the glory and excitement of war, and the hardiest soldier would shrink from it, as from cold blooded murder." "Such a peace establishment would be at once cheap and beautiful," rejoined I; and so we parted.—*Columbian Magazine*.

TO MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

Beloved Brethren,—The ancient ministers of the true religion, priests and prophets, were patriotic; they felt a deep solicitude for the welfare of their nation, for all Israel. To them no country was like Canaan: it was the glorious holy land. The apostles, though their mission was to all the world, participated strongly in the same feeling. We also are indebted to our country for many blessings; we enjoy protection, civil liberty, and, what our fathers sought in coming to this western continent, "freedom to worship God." We then owe important duties to our country.

We have doubtless lifted up the voice of thanksgiving and praise to the Sovereign Ruler of the world, for the amicable settlement of the Oregon controversy. The evils thus prevented, and the blessings secured, future ages and the chronicles of eternity only can fully disclose. It is believed that God has been praised by his children, throughout the length and breadth of the land, for inspiring the rulers and people of both nations with the spirit of forbearance and conciliation.

But there is a discount upon this joy. We are involved in war: nor can we lay all the blame upon Mexico. That she has been in the fault in her intercourse with us is doubtless true, but it may appear, and an enlightened world may so decide, that she has been more sinned against, than sinning. According to the best information, the river Neuces was the western or southwestern boundary of the province of Texas. If we admit our claim to Texas proper to be good, what right had the republic of Texas to cede, and we to possess, that vast tract of country between the Neuces and the Rio Grande, an average distance